



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

LEBANESE MAN SENTENCED IN CONSPIRACY TO SUPPORT A DESIGNATED FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

DETROIT– A Lebanese man was sentenced on Wednesday in U.S. District Court to 54 months imprisonment, announced United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

Mahmoud Youssef Kourani, 34, pleaded guilty on March 1, 2005 to the charge of Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to the Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization, Hizballah. The sentence was handed down by United States District Judge Robert H. Cleland.

The information presented to the court at the time of the guilty plea showed that Mahmoud Kourani organized and hosted meetings at his Dearborn residence during Ramadan of 2002. The meetings featured guest speakers from Lebanon, who solicited the participants to make donations to Hizballah.

Pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, effective October 8, 1997, the Secretary of State designated Hizballah as a foreign terrorist organization by finding that the organization is a foreign organization that engages in terrorist activity threatening the security of United States nationals or the national security of the United States.

Hizballah, also known as “Party of God” and “Islamic Jihad,” among other names, is a worldwide terrorist network based in Lebanon, which has conducted numerous high profile terrorist attacks in the name of Islamic fundamentalism. The money solicited by Kourani’s conspiracy was intended to support Hizballah’s “orphans of martyrs” program to benefit the families of those killed in Hizballah terrorist operations or by Hizballah’s enemies.

United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, commended the work of the Special Agents of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, who originally arrested Kourani in the summer of 2003 and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who conducted the investigation, with prosecution provided by Assistant United States Attorney Kenneth R. Chadwell.

“This case underscores the seriousness with which my office, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security view terrorist fund raising as well as our strong commitment to investigating and prosecuting these types of cases,” said United States Attorney Murphy. “Raising money for

Hizballah, or any other designated terrorist organization, is a serious crime which has been, and will continue to be, vigorously pursued in the Eastern District of Michigan.”

“This case should send a clear message to those who seek to provide material support to terrorist organizations,” stated SAC Moskowitz. “ICE, as a partner in the Joint Terrorism Task Force, will not hesitate to use the nation’s immigration laws or any tool at our disposal in order to keep America safe.”

Daniel D. Roberts, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation said, “This matter represents how effective law enforcement and intelligence agencies can be when combining resources and working together. I join our partner in Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the United States Attorney’s Office in commending all investigative personnel in their efforts in achieving this exceptional result.”

Kourani has already been ordered deported to Lebanon following service of his sentence.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.